

HOT SHEET

Thursday, June 30, 2005 – Kids Day!

NOTE TO EDITORS: Today is “Kids Day” and the third day of competition at the 25th National Veterans Wheelchair Games—the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world. The Games, a great patriotic, sports, and health/fitness story, run through tomorrow, June 19. **Today’s events at the Convention Center include a special “Kids Day” program where local children (most disabled) will learn from seasoned and world class disabled athletes. Actress Bo Derek**, National Honorary Chairperson of VA’s National Rehabilitation Special Events, will be handing out medals and visiting the athletes all week. For information about the Games or to arrange interviews, call the National Veterans Wheelchair Games Media Center (at the Convention Center), at (612) 335-6668 or 335-6669. Visit the Games web site at www.wheelchairgames.org for continuing updates.

POWER CHAIR 220 RACE

8:00 am

University of St. Thomas

This one is a blast! The race allows motorized wheelchair-users to take part in a track-type event by racing around the track for 220 meters. All power chairs are allowed to compete, regardless of battery size, model or weight of wheelchair. Two categories of competition include hand control and head/mouth control. **This event extends competitive opportunities for the highest level of injuries. Most of the power chair-users will sign up for this one, so watch out and get out of their way!**

POWERCHAIR RELAY

8:00 am

University of St. Thomas

This new relay event allows motorized wheelchair-users to participate in an exhibition relay race. Each team will have three athletes that each use a different type of power wheelchair: a hand control, a “sip and puff”, and a chin/mouth controlled wheelchair. Watch them team up to beat the competition in this sure-to-be-fun, second-year exhibition today!

TRACK EVENTS

8:00 & 9:30 am; 2:00 pm

University of St. Thomas

You’ve got to see this! Wheelchair track events are run as finals on a hard-surface track with a minimum of six lanes. Front casters of the wheelchair constitute the starting and finishing points. Watch competitors from novice to world class run both short and longer distance heats. Quad track will be held in the morning, with others competing in the afternoon. **Wheelchair track provides excellent photo and interview opportunities**, as athletes of all ages and abilities compete in the latest, brightly-colored racing wheelchairs and attire.

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***SLALOM**

8:00 & 10:00 am

Convention Center, Hall B

Ever see a wheelchair climb stairs? A true wheelchair sport, the slalom event is a test of agility, skill, speed, and strength around a challenging obstacle course. The course is on a smooth surface, defined by flag gates around which the athlete must maneuver both forward and backward. Obstacles are added including ramps, platforms, slopes and hurdles. An extremely emotional event with incredible displays of the athletes' strength, willpower, and sheer determination! Lots of cheers and spectator excitement as the paraplegic and amputee competitors test their mettle today.

KIDS DAY ACTIVITIES

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Convention Center, Hall D

Area children (many with physical disabilities) will participate in this all-day event at the site of the slalom and table tennis competitions. Local children will interact with the veterans, cheer on the competitors at the slalom events, participate in special demonstration events, have lunch with the athletes, then watch the power soccer games. **Great photo, interview opportunity. Kids will be present at all afternoon and evening events for interaction and instruction from the wheelchair athletes.** All kids will be awarded their own Kids Day medals at the conclusion of the program.

***POWER SOCCER GAMES 3-4; 5-6**

1:00, 3:00 & 8:00 pm

Convention Center, Halls B+C

The newest medal event, power soccer is a unique, competitive sport for motorized wheelchair users, played on a basketball size court by two 4-member teams (one member as goalie) using a large rubberized ball. The object is to maneuver the ball across the opponent's goal line – and to keep them from doing the same. **Great action!** The consolation game is at 8:00 pm, with the Championship Game beginning at 3:00 pm on Friday.

***BASKETBALL**

GAMES 7-8; 9-10

6:30 & 8:00 pm

Convention Center, Halls B+C

The rules for wheelchair basketball are essentially the same as rules of the NCAA, with the wheelchair considered part of the player's body in determining physical contact fouls. Three levels of player classification are used to achieve team balance, and players are allowed two pushes between dribbles. This is a fast and furious competition. Don't let the wheelchairs fool you—this is hard-core, spirited, exciting basketball with lots of crashing wheelchairs and occasional collisions! The Consolation Game will begin at 1:00 pm on Friday, with the Championship Game beginning at 3:00 pm.

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OTHER EVENTS ON THURSDAY

- **Golf Exhibition** – Braemar Golf Course, 1:00 pm
- **Table Tennis** — Convention Center, Hall D, 8:00 & 10:00 am

LAST DAY AT THE GAMES IS TOMORROW, FRIDAY!!!

- **Handcycling** – Lake Harriett – 8:00 am
- **Archery** – Ft. Snelling Soccer Fields – 8:00 am
- **Softball** – Convention Center, Halls B+C – Games 5 & 6 8:00 am; Finals – 10:00 am
- **Motorized Wheelchair Rally** – Como Lake – 9:00 am
- **Slalom “Super G” Finals** – Convention Center, Hall B – 9:00 am
- **Basketball Finals** – Convention Center, Hall C – Consolation Game – 1:00 pm;
Championship Game – 3:00 pm
- **Quad Rugby Finals** – Convention Center, Hall C – Championship Game – 1:00 pm
- **Power Soccer Finals** – Convention Center, Hall C – Championship Game – 3:00 pm
- **Closing Ceremonies & Banquet** – Convention Center, Hall D – 7:00 pm

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